

8152:3/86

HISTORIC AMERICAN BAPTIST

RESOLUTION ON ECONOMIC JUSTICE

I. Christian Industry

Recognizing in the words of Christ "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brothers," the abiding charter of democracy and seeing in this the summons to realize the democracy of all life, we believe that this Christian principle applied to industry implies that industry is a social service whose ruling motive should be not the profit of the few, but the welfare of all, and that the service motive must become the dominant spirit in both the methods and processes of industry.

We believe, hence, that men are brothers in industry and their relations must be such as to express and promote brotherly fellowship; that industry is a partnership whose successful working depends upon the participation and cooperation of all parties; that all the partners in industry should have a voice in the direction of the enterprise, either directly or through chosen representatives; that the distribution of the product and profit should be made on accepted principles of equity which represent the judgment and claims of all parties.

II. Government

RESOLVED, That it is the duty of government in all of its functions, as expressed in the Scriptures and in the Constitution of the United States, to place the protection of life, liberty, and human welfare above the vested rights of property and power; and we urge a steadfast resistance to any tendency in our legislation and courts to give primacy to the protection of property at the expense of life and human welfare.

III. Social and Industrial Relations

WHEREAS, The condition of a just and peaceable adjustment of industrial relations is the acceptance of the principle of cooperation in service for the common good in place of unrestricted competition for private or group advantage; and

WHEREAS, So fundamental a change in the spirit and working of our economic system can be brought about only by long and patient experiment and education; be it therefore

RESOLVED, That we call upon our churches to study the industrial situation from the standpoint of the teachings of Jesus, with the view of cultivating in the minds of our people the Christian conception of labor and wealth and of

fitting themselves for sympathetic and intelligent leadership in the solution of industrial problems; and we urge that, in a wise, practical way, such study may be made a definite part of the program of religious education.

RESOLVED, That we remind our churches and all our Christian institutions of the importance of scrutinizing their own business methods and keeping them in harmony with the teachings of Jesus, to the end that by example as well as by precept, they may set before the world the Christian ideal of fair dealing.

RESOLVED, That we summon all our people, employers and employees alike, to consider their business relations an opportunity for the most practical expression of their Christian faith, and so to devote themselves with purpose and patience to the working out of such organization and processes in industry as will exalt human values, secure more personal relations, and ultimately realize in full the Christian ideal of brotherhood, cooperation and service.

IV. Economic Study

WHEREAS, Our industrial world, built upon the competitive and profit method and motive, makes the living of the Golden Rule and Sermon on the Mount difficult in our generation, be it

RESOLVED, That we commend to our pastors and teachers a careful study of

recent literature on our economic situation in order that they may find the way of Christ through our present problems.

Adopted by the Northern Baptist Convention - Part I, 1920; Part II, 1923; Part III, 1924; Part IV, 1929

**Affirmed by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1986
(General Board Reference # - 8152:3/86)**

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

Our world is constantly being brought closer together. Expansion of the technology of communication and trade, provide factors which lead to greater understanding and peace among nations. But at the same time there are strong negative forces at work among political, social and economic powers on national and international levels, producing conflict, isolation, and the deprivation of the rights of groups and individuals.

We recognize that basic human rights are given by God, and that the rights of persons interact and are interdependent with social rights. At times personal rights and social rights will be in tension, for individual rights can be used to defend the privileged position of a few at the expense of

the many, and on the other hand, the rights of the majority of society may be used to trample on the rights of individuals or minorities.

As American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights, and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

2. The right to the basic necessities of food, shelter, clothing, and health care;

8. The right to develop skills and abilities, to utilize these in economic, political, social, intellectual and religious institutions and to receive a just return for one's labor;
